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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes 20 inexpensive or no-cost techniques for increasing enrollment and student completion rates in adult education programs. Outlined in the guide are the following techniques or activities: refining class logistics; sponsoring liaisons; designing registration packets and recruitment fliers and writing press releases, radio public service announcements, and letters to prospective students; establishing an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) self-help group; writing a multilingual flyer; sponsoring a student-of-the-year award; advertising on a fast-food placemat; planning an adult education week; designing in-house presentations to acquaint staff of local agencies with available adult education programs; implementing a bring-a-friend-to-class program; using graduation exercises as an opportunity to enhance public relations; using resource persons from local college marketing or advertising classes; obtaining celebrity endorsements; maintaining ongoing contacts; sponsoring an open house; and using packaged public relations. Each activity description includes information about the goals, time requirements, cost, and procedures of the activity as well as a discussion of its relative strengths and weakness and additional recommendations for expanding on the basic implementation procedures outlined. (MN)

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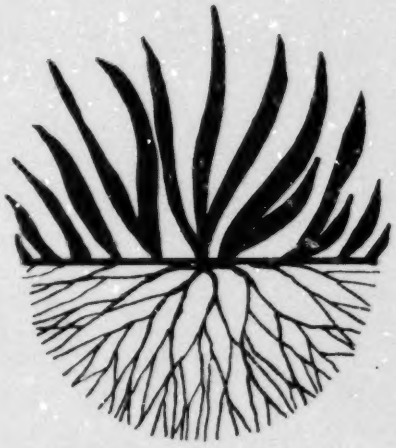

Grassroots Publicity

Proven, low- or no-cost ideas for adult education programs

by Tana Reiff, Project Disseminator
and Melissa Jamula, Public-Relations Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

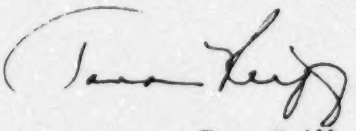
"BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY FOR PUBLICITY!" you say. Unless you have a waiting list of prospective students, your program probably needs a certain amount of publicity — to recruit new students, to garner support, or to merely stay in the public's awareness. But advertising costs money, and your program budget just doesn't cover such expenses.

Well, think again. Some of the most effective publicity — many argue the most effective publicity — starts at the grassroots level and costs little or nothing: exploiting the media for your nonprofit purposes, soliciting the support of school and governmental officials, finding unusual outlets for your message, generating infectious enthusiasm among your program's participants.

And so this special project, underwritten as a special demonstration project by funds available from Section 310 of the Adult Education Act, set out not only to find low- or no-cost publicity methods, but to do them — and then document what happened.

The activities described in this book were conducted at Reading Area Community College, Reading, Pennsylvania, during the 1984-85 school year, under the direction of Melissa Jamula, ABE/GED/ESL Coordinator at RACC (working with 33 classes at 17 sites in Berks County) and Publicity Coordinator for this project. Some of the ideas we had tried before; some we had wanted to try but never got around to them. But all of them cost little or nothing, except, of course, our time. And in many cases, students became involved in the activities, which made it all even more worthwhile.

We're not telling you that the way we went about our publicity activities was the way to do them. Rather, we're telling you that we had ideas, we tried them out, here's how they worked for us, and here's what we learned from them. You will probably do them differently, but we hope you'll them a try.



— Tana Reiff
Project Disseminator
Lancaster, PA
May 1985

PLEASE NOTE: Activities are outlined in a standard format; however, the absence of a certain topic heading indicates that any description under that heading would have been insignificant. For example, the absence of a "Major Weakness" heading would mean that the activity had no significant weaknesses. Feel free to duplicate any materials from this book.

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Grassroots Publicity

#1 • CLASS LOGISTICS

GOAL

To encourage attendance in adult-education programs by housing classes at local schools, often during regular school hours.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Initial contacts a few months before new term
Planning time: A few hours
Duration: Length of program term

COST

None to minimal, depending on rental fees, if any

PROCEDURE

1. Through an informal survey, we determined that a number of our clients would feel more comfortable attending class in an atmosphere in which they felt secure. Local schools seemed to be the ideal location, and what better role model for the children attending these schools!
2. We approached school principals about holding classes in their buildings. Most were very enthusiastic and cooperative.
3. We scheduled daytime classes at four local schools as well as a number of evening classes in several schools.
4. We made sure that the rooms in which classes were scheduled were furnished with adult-sized furniture.
5. Before classes began, we sent letters home with every child at each school. We also spoke with each faculty, explaining our program directly to them.
6. The classes were conducted in the local schools as planned.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Very good; classes are larger than we would have expected at other locations, and attendance is consistent.

Major Strength: Conducting classes in local schools is helpful in recruiting adults who are too apprehensive to enter an unfamiliar building. This served as excellent public relations for both our program and the participating school.

Major Weakness: Logistics can be a problem if a suitable classroom is not available.

Unexpected Occurrence: Local schools appreciated being able to include in their schools' "climate improvement" reports the fact that adult classes were meeting in their buildings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Before contacting individual schools, be sure to first speak to the central administration.
2. It is <u>imperative</u> to speak to the school's faculty about your program. This avoids misunderstandings or resentment once classes are in progress.

Grassroots Publicity

#2 • SPONSOR LIAISON

GOAL

To reach every household in the county with information on ABE/GED/ESL programs via a publication of the sponsoring agency.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: July, or two months before new term, or before agency deadlines
Planning time: Approximately 2 hours
Duration: Major mailing in September; may also participate in two others later

COST

No direct cost to our program

PROCEDURE

Most ABE/GED programs in Pennsylvania are associated with a sponsoring agency. Making good use of the sponsor's existing publicity mechanisms really pays off for us. By giving our program space in their Fall Term Bulletin, everyone benefits: our program receives valuable free publicity; the sponsor's community image is enhanced; and, of course, the public learns of adult education opportunities.

1. We found out exactly what publications our sponsoring agency produces, who receives them, and when they are mailed.
2. We approached the public relations staff with enthusiasm, stressing the community service angle.
3. We wrote and submitted appealing, concise blocks of information describing highlights of our program.
4. The public relations office prepared the layout; we proofed it — especially dates, times, locations, and other critical items.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Tremendous! Through random intake screening of new students, we concluded that the Fall Term Bulletin had produced a significantly high response rate, though specific figures were impossible to report. We will be included in all three Bulletins produced during the year.

Major Strength: The Bulletin gave us a "professional" look and high visibility throughout the entire county at no direct cost to our program.

Major Weakness: Layout was changed after our proofing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Request the opportunity to proof all copy to be printed.
2. Include a contact name and/or phone number in every block of information. Potential students might want to clip only the block that applies to them or may not be able to spot the contact box at the bottom of the page (moved to top as shown on page 4).
3. Keep information as general as possible so that last-minute technical changes in your program plans will not mean that you have publicized misinformation.
4. Be sure to approach your sponsoring agency in plenty of time. Publicity is often prepared months in advance.

See a reduction of our page in the Fall Term Bulletin on page 5.

#2 SPONSOR LIAISON The inside cover of RACC's Fall Term Bulletin was devoted to the ABE/GED/ESL program.

Adult Education Courses & Programs

For additional information call Melissa Jamula at 371-5713 or 372-4721, Ext. 283.

Standard Evening High School

Reminder for the Fall

Standard Evening High School Now Offers:

1. Individualized Scheduling
2. Credit for your work experience
3. Graduation exercises
4. High school transcript evaluation
5. Various school activities such as the Yearbook, the Senior Dinner Dance, and class reunions.

All of the above can be accomplished by attending our classes.

Students Whose Class Has Not Graduated Must Have:

1. Written permission by parent or guardian and home high school
2. Official transcript from last high school attended

For additional information call Doug Kauffman at 371-5713 or 372-4721, Ext. 280

SEE YOU AT NIGHT SCHOOL!

Adult Basic Education

Adult Basic Education

Do You Want Help . . .

to read?

to write?

to do math?

Come to our classes!

English as a Second Language

Estudia Ingles en estos sitios:
Studia inglese in questi posti:
Hoc anh van tai nhung trung tam sau day:
Study English at these centers:

Office of
, colleges,

d at least

GED High School Equivalency Diploma

An Opportunity . . .

to study for your high school diploma

to increase your job opportunities by improving your reading and math skills

to become a knowledgeable consumer

to receive academic and career counseling

If you are at least 18 years of age . . . you have a second chance to get a high school diploma. In RACC's free G.E.D. classes, you will receive instruction in all the basic skills as well as tutoring for the General Educational Development (G.E.D.) High School Diploma issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. There is no red tape. This instruction includes all supplies and tutoring for as long as you need to improve your educational level. Classes will be held at 10 locations throughout Reading and Berks County.

GED Tests

The General Educational Development (G.E.D.) diploma is, by law, accepted by business, industry, and colleges as a legitimate high school diploma. The G.E.D. exam is scheduled at Reading Senior High School at least once a month. Any Pennsylvania resident who is 18 years old and whose high school class has graduated may take the exam. Spanish speaking adults may now take the exam in Spanish. The exam cost is $15.00. Free instruction is available prior to taking the exam. For an appointment call 371-5713 or 372-4721, extension 280.

College-Bound GED

Are you considering going on to college once you've obtained your G.E.D.? Our "College-Bound" G.E.D. Class may be for you! This class is a bit more intense than our other G.E.D. classes, and additional topics such as college study skills are discussed. RACC counselors will be available to you to answer any questions about college you might have.

Job Skills

Do you need help to find and "land" that perfect job? Once you've obtained your G.E.D. diploma, you'll be invited to attend our 4-session "Job Skills" course. Get one step ahead in the work world by examining career opportunities, practicing successful interviewing skills, completing a resume, and learning to properly complete application forms. This is a class you won't want to miss!

Grassroots Publicity

#3 • REGISTRATION PACKET

GOAL

To acquaint new students with the adult education program and to provide program information to potential students.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: At least several weeks before new term

Planning Time: Variable, depending on how extensive the packet is and how much clerical help is available. It took us only a few hours.

Duration: The entire school year

COST

Variable, depending on size of packet and quality of folder. Figure about $6.00 per 100 copies of each page. Folders cost from 34¢ each for high-quality glossy folders to about 15¢ for a lower quality.

PROCEDURE

1. Decide what information needs to be included in your packet. We chose to include (a) an information sheet prepared for each student, indicating class time, location, room number, instructor's name, and special instructions (such as which door to enter, etc.); (b) our ABE flyer, which is a brief overview of our ABE, GED, and ESL classes; (c) a general information sheet on the GED exam; (d) a list of highlights of special activities; (e) an invitation to call, including the contact person's working hours and phone number; (f) information on two related programs, Standard Evening High School and our Language Bank.
2. We allowed ample time to have the materials printed, order folders, and stuff the packets.
3. We distribute packets to students when they register and suggest that, when finished, they pass on their packets to friends. We also make the packets available on request to potential students.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Excellent.

Major Strength: The packet allows students to examine important material at their leisure and to absorb information they may have been too overwhelmed to understand on the day of registration.

Major Weakness: Depending on the cost of folders, the total cost of providing these packets can become quite high.

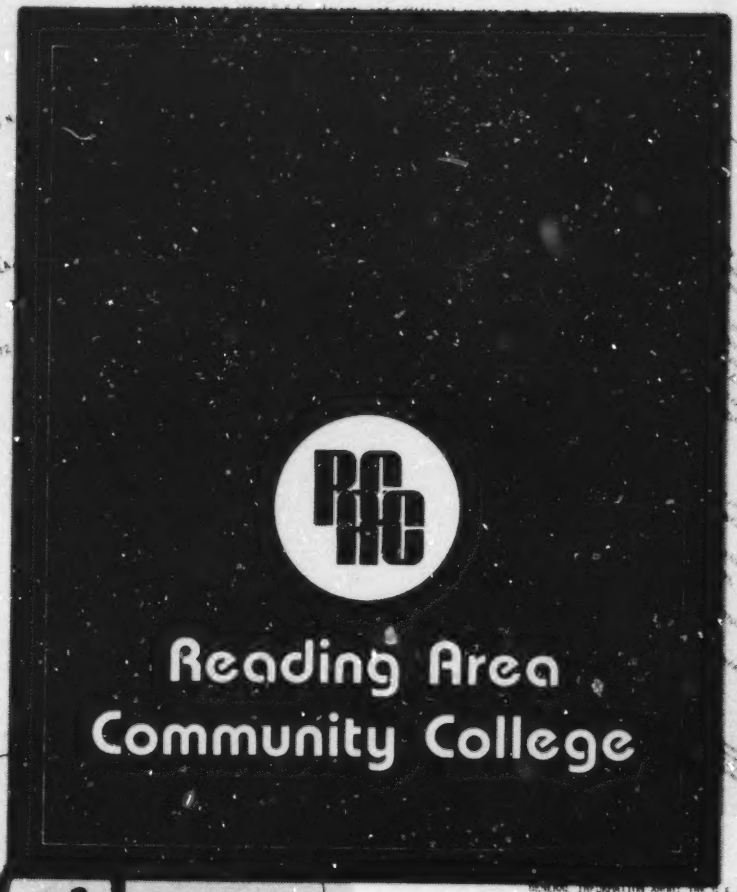
Unexpected Occurrence: Students took an unexpected pride in their RACC folders. They became walking advertisements for the college as they, for instance, carried the folders to work with them before coming to class.

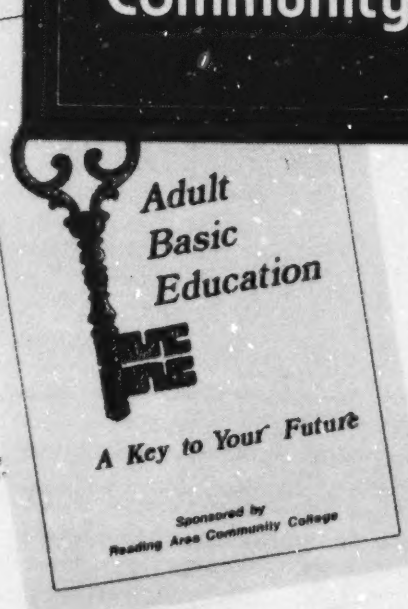
RECOMMENDATIONS

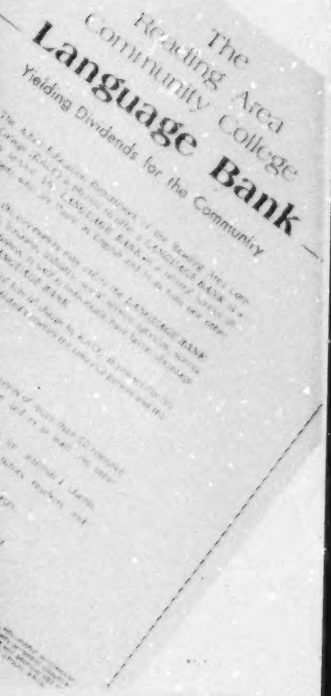
1. Include information about other services available through your institution—and share the cost with those programs.
2. If your budget just can't afford folders, simply clip or staple the papers together. Keep in mind, however, that the folders create an impressive "welcome."

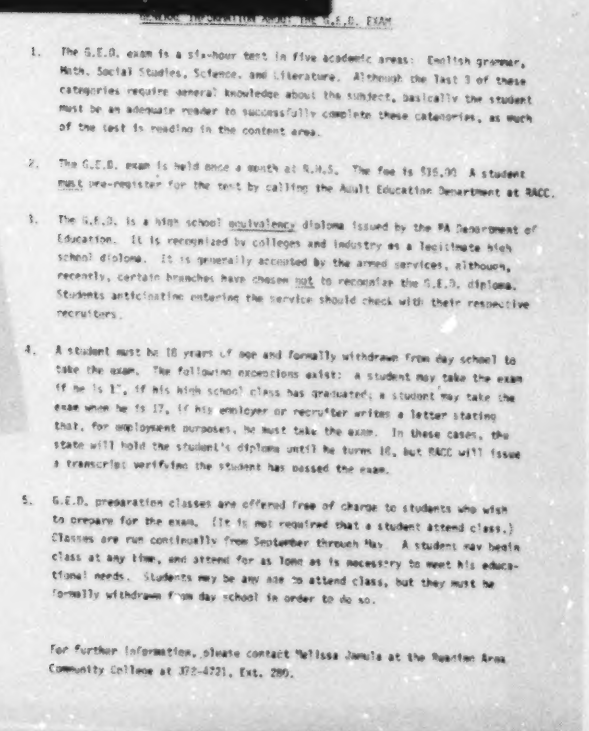
See a photograph of our Registration Packet on page 7.

#3 REGISTRATION PACKET
Everything new students needed to know was neatly tucked into a shiny red folder.
Actual size: 9" by 12".









GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE G.E.D. EXAM

1. The G.E.D. exam is a six-hour test in five academic areas: English grammar, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Literature. Although the last 3 of these categories require general knowledge about the subject, basically the student must be an adequate reader to successfully complete these categories, as much of the test is reading in the content area.

2. The G.E.D. exam is held once a month at R.H.S. The fee is $35.00 A student MUST pre-register for the test by calling the Adult Education Department at RACC.

3. The G.E.D. is a high school equivalency diploma issued by the PA Department of Education. It is recognized by colleges and industry as a legitimate high school diploma. It is generally accepted by the armed services, although, recently, certain branches have chosen not to recognize the G.E.D. diploma. Students anticipating entering the service should check with their respective recruiters.

4. A student must be 18 years of age and formally withdrawn from day school to take the exam. The following exceptions exist: A student may take the exam if he is 17, if his high school class has graduated; a student may take the exam when he is 17, if his employer or recruiter writes a letter stating that, for employment purposes, he must take the exam. In these cases, the state will hold the student's diploma until he turns 18, but RACC will issue a transcript verifying the student has passed the exam.

5. G.E.D. preparation classes are offered free of charge to students who wish to prepare for the exam. (It is not required that a student attend class.) Classes are run continually from September through May. A student may begin class at any time, and attend for as long as is necessary to meet his educational needs. Students may be any age to attend class, but they must be formally withdrawn from day school in order to do so.

For further information, please contact Melissa Jamula at the Reading Area Community College at 372-4721, Ext. 280.

Grassroots Publicity

#4 • RECRUITMENT FLYER

GOAL

To provide a concise, professional-looking flyer to advertise adult education programs to potential students in the population at large.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Anytime, though the sooner the better, to provide publicity throughout the entire school year.

Planning time: 3 hours

Duration Ongoing

COST

Approximately $170 for 3,000 copies

PROCEDURE

1. We formulated general ideas of what messages the flyer should convey. Keeping the target audience in mind, we made the flyer easy to read, used larger type, double-spaced the copy, and kept the message as clear as possible, stressing our program's benefits.
2. We approached our institution's graphics department with our ideas. (An outside quick printer would also suffice.) We discussed the layout and overall approach.
3. We wrote down exactly what would be contained in the flyer, then gave the copy to the graphics people.
4. The graphics department typeset the copy. We proofread it and approved the layout before printing.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Favorable, though impossible to measure precisely

Major Strengths: The flyer serves as an initial contact vehicle with potential students. We have every reason to believe that, as hoped, the flyer makes a positive impression without appearing threatening.

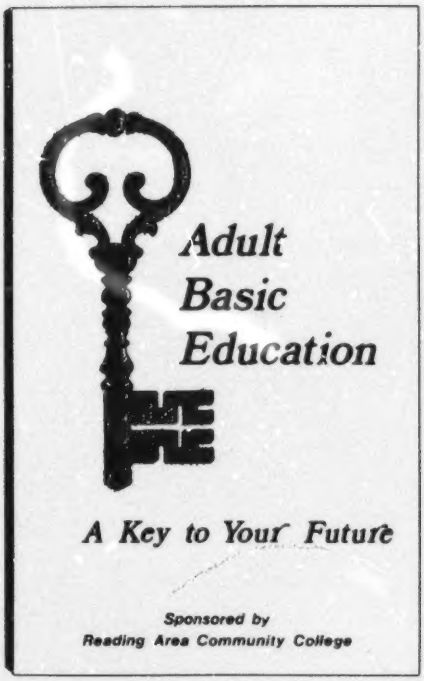
Major Weakness: This is one of the costlier publicity tools, though cost per unit was only 5.6¢.

Unexpected Occurrences: The flyer has also served as a good initial public relations instrument with industries, human service agencies, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keep the information in the flyer general, to keep it undated, and simple, to avoid intimidating details. Allow space on the back cover to address and stamp the flyer for mailing without an envelope.
2. Much of the cost involved in this type of flyer is for the printer's labor and printing plates. That is why it's a good idea to order larger quantities if there will be an outlet for them.

See a reduction of our flyer on page 9.



#4 RECRUITMENT FLYER

Cover is shown here in smaller proportion to inside panels. Actual size: 5½" by 8½", folded.

50% OF THE ADULTS IN PENNSYLVANIA DO NOT HAVE THEIR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS!

Adults who are seeking employment are finding it increasingly important to have their high school diplomas, or at least have adequate reading and math skills. The Adult Education Department of the Reading Area Community College is pleased to offer a program that can provide adults with these skills.

Classes in the Adult Basic Education program are available, free of charge, to adults in Berks County.

THE G. E. D. HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA

The G.E.D. High School Equivalency Diploma is issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. It is accepted as a legitimate high school diploma by colleges, industry, and many branches of the armed forces.

The Adult Education Department offers voluntary classes to help prepare a student for the G.E.D. exam. Classes are conducted both days and evenings at various locations throughout Berks County, with an open-enrollment policy in effect. Academic and Career counseling is available to adults in this program.

BASIC EDUCATION

Basic Education classes offer instruction in beginning reading and math skills. Materials used in these classes are consumer-oriented, providing necessary information for "daily living".

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Many opportunities exist for adults to learn to speak, read and write English. Classes are conducted at a number of locations throughout Reading and offer various levels of instruction.

In past years, our classes have had as many as 20 different countries represented!!

HIGHLIGHTS OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

- Pertinent, Adult-Oriented Classes
- Free of charge to all adults in Berks County
- Qualified, concerned instructors
- Flexible Scheduling/Various locations
- Open-Entry Policy
- Relaxed Atmosphere
- Individualized Instruction

Sponsored by:
The Reading Area Community College

For further information about Adult Basic Education classes, contact Melissa Jamula, Coordinator, at (215) 372-4721, Ext. 280.

Grassroots Publicity

#5 • PRESS RELEASES

GOAL

To write press releases to get our news published in local newspapers, for the purpose of creating awareness of adult education program offerings to both the general public and potential students.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: About two weeks in advance of a noteworthy event. (Consult local media as to how far in advance they prefer to see releases.)

Planning time: Approximately 2 hours initially, less time with subsequent releases

Duration: As appropriate occasions arise

COST

None

PROCEDURE

1. We identified area newspapers. We didn't overlook local papers and weekly "shoppers" — most have a loyal following.
2. We called the newspapers on our list and found out to whom news releases should be addressed.
3. We wrote and submitted a concise release to specific newspapers whenever an important event arose. These included announcements of our state Student of the Year nominee and reports for one newspaper's Spanish-language column.
4. We always included a short cover letter thanking the paper in advance for helping to publicize this community service.
5. The papers consistently published our stories, though usually in edited form. On several occasions, reporters contacted us for more information and/or to visit our program with a staff photographer.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Widespread coverage that would not have been otherwise possible

Major Strengths: This is no-cost, high-visibility publicity requiring a minimum of time.

Major Weakness: No control over when, or where in the paper, the article will appear

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. If you operate in "satellite" centers, you might want to localize your news releases to the weekly shoppers and small-town papers. For example, we sent a release to The Hamburg Item stating "GED classes to be held at Hamburg High School." The article did not list all of our locations. When interested persons called for further information, we directed those unable to attend our Hamburg location to other centers.
2. If you live in a community where there is a large Hispanic population, there may be a Spanish-language newspaper or a Spanish column in the local newspaper. This is an excellent place to publicize ESL classes.
3. Another good place to send news releases is to television stations. Call a specific reporter—one who specializes in education-related topics, for instance—to find out whether typed releases or just a phone call is the preferred method.

See two press releases, a cover letter, and the resulting published article on page 11.

#5 PRESS RELEASES

With this cover letter on top, the two releases became the article at right.

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

(215) 372-4721

September 13, 1984

Mr. Jack Malats, City Editor
Reading Eagle/Times
P.O. Box 582
Reading, PA 19603

Good Morning!

Enclosed are two releases regarding Adult Basic Education classes offered by Reading Area Community College. We are able, through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, to offer these classes, FREE of charge, to adults in Berks County.

We're very pleased that, in the past, these classes have played a major role in educating thousands of adults in our community. We feel the classes are extremely beneficial--but we need your help! Our biggest obstacle each year is to "spread the word" that these programs are available. If you are able to run these releases in both the Reading Eagle and Times, we would be very grateful.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula
Coordinator, Adult Basic Education

MJ/nr

NEWS Reading Area Community College
READING, PA 19603

September 13, 1984 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSES OFFERED AT RACC

Two programs will be offered, free of charge, to adults in Berks County by the Reading Area Community College.

The Adult Basic Education program will teach adults to read and write by using very practical, consumer-oriented materials.

English as a Second Language (ESL) will offer instruction in speaking, reading and writing English to non-native adults. ESL classes will be conducted at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels.

Both programs will begin the week of September 24th and will continue throughout the year. Adults may enter the program any time.

For specific class times and locations, please contact Melissa Jamula, Coordinator of Adult Basic Education, at RACC, (215) 372-4721, Ext. 283.

- 30 -

NEWS Reading Area Community College
READING, PA 19603

September 13, 1984 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

RACC TO OFFER GED PREPARATION CLASSES

The Reading Area Community College will offer classes, free of charge, to prepare for the GED high school equivalency diploma. Classes will be conducted mornings and afternoons beginning on September 24th at RACC, and will be offered evenings at 18th and Haak Elementary School, the Reading-Muhlenberg Vo-Tech, and at the following high schools: Reading, Wilson, Exeter, Hamburg, Daniel Boone, and Twin Valley.

Classes are available to all adults in Berks County. For registration information, contact Melissa Jamula, Coordinator of Adult Basic Education, at RACC, (215) 372-4721, Ext. 283.

- 30 -

RACC plans to offer new courses

Three new courses will be offered by Reading Area Community College, staring Monday.

Adult Basic Education will teach adults to read and write by using practical, consumer-oriented materials.

English as a Second Language will offer instruction in speaking, reading, and writing English. These classes will be offered at the intermediate and advanced levels.

Both programs will continue throughout the school year and adults may enter at any time.

The general equivalency diploma program will be offered mornings and afternoons at RACC.

Evening programs will be held in the 18th and Haak Elementary School, Reading-Muhlenberg Vocational-Technical School, and at Reading, Wilson, Exeter, Hamburg, Daniel Boone, and the Twin Valley high schools.

Specific times and locations on all three programs are available from Melissa Jamula, coordinator of adult basic education at RACC.

Grassroots Publicity

#6 • RADIO P.S.A.

GOAL

To inform potential adult students of available adult-education programs via a repeated 30-second radio announcement.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Last week in August (before term begins), or anytime

Time Required: Approximately 2 hours for each PSA

Duration: Over as much time as the station allows for PSAs. Our local stations aired our undated, general PSA throughout the entire school year.

COST

None. Another option is to buy time. On our major local station time costs $20 per 30-second spot at an unspecified airing time, $23 during a specified time period, and a 20% discount for 15 spots in a week.

PROCEDURE

1. We identified local AM and FM radio stations and contacted each station to determine who is responsible for public service announcements (PSAs). In most cases we were told to send PSAs to the station, Attn: Public Service Announcement.
2. We wrote a general PSA with no time value.
3. We submitted the PSA to the top AM and FM stations, along with a short cover letter. For a PSA with a time value, we would indicate effective beginning and ending dates.
4. After hearing the PSA on the air several times, we wrote the station a thank-you note.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Very good, thanks to frequent airings. Impossible to measure exact response.

Major Strengths: This is another excellent no-cost technique that reaches thousands.

Major Weakness: No control over when or how often the PSA will be aired. We did not depend on PSAs as our primary publicity outlet.

Unexpected Occurrences: We received many favorable comments from the general public. Acquaintances and staff members of other agencies heard the announcement and made a point of mentioning it to us.

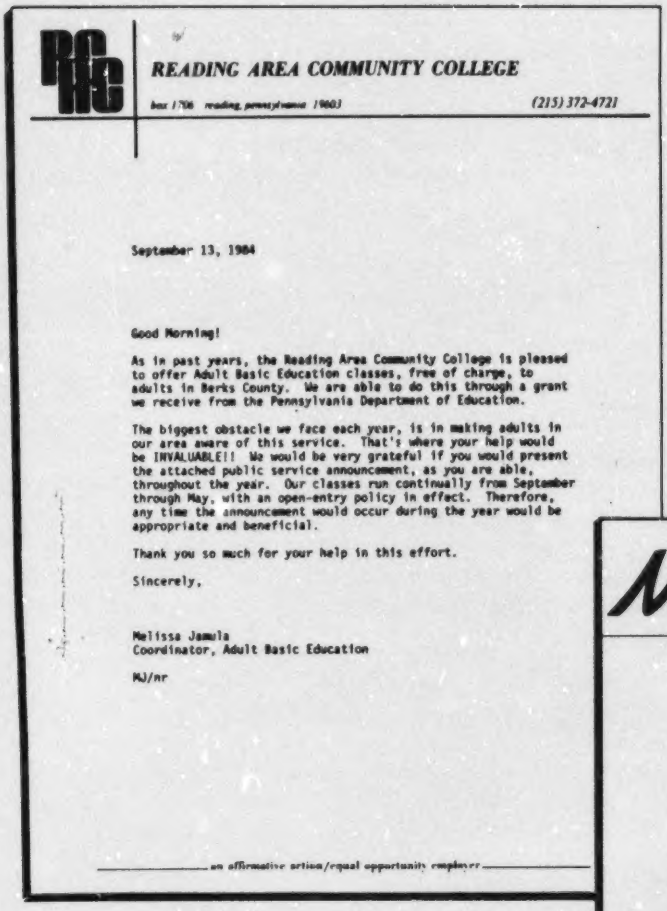
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Keep your PSA general, highlighting the fact that one can earn a diploma, that classes are free of charge, that instruction is individualized, etc. Make your program sound appealing.
2. Concentrate on the types of radio stations your target audience listens to. For example, it's likely to be a waste of effort to contact classical music stations. The best bet is FM rock music.
3. Be sure to include contact information. Then, when potential students phone, be prepared to go into more detail. Whoever answers the phone should know either how to answer typical questions or to whom inquiries should be referred.

See our PSA script and cover letter on page 13.

#6 RADIO P.S.A.

The cover letter. . .



READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

box 1706 reading, pennsylvania 19603 (215) 372-4721

September 13, 1984

Good Morning!

As in past years, the Reading Area Community College is pleased to offer Adult Basic Education classes, free of charge, to adults in Berks County. We are able to do this through a grant we receive from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The biggest obstacle we face each year, is in making adults in our area aware of this service. That's where your help would be INVALUABLE!! We would be very grateful if you would present the attached public service announcement, as you are able, throughout the year. Our classes run continually from September through May, with an open-entry policy in effect. Therefore, any time the announcement would occur during the year would be appropriate and beneficial.

Thank you so much for your help in this effort.

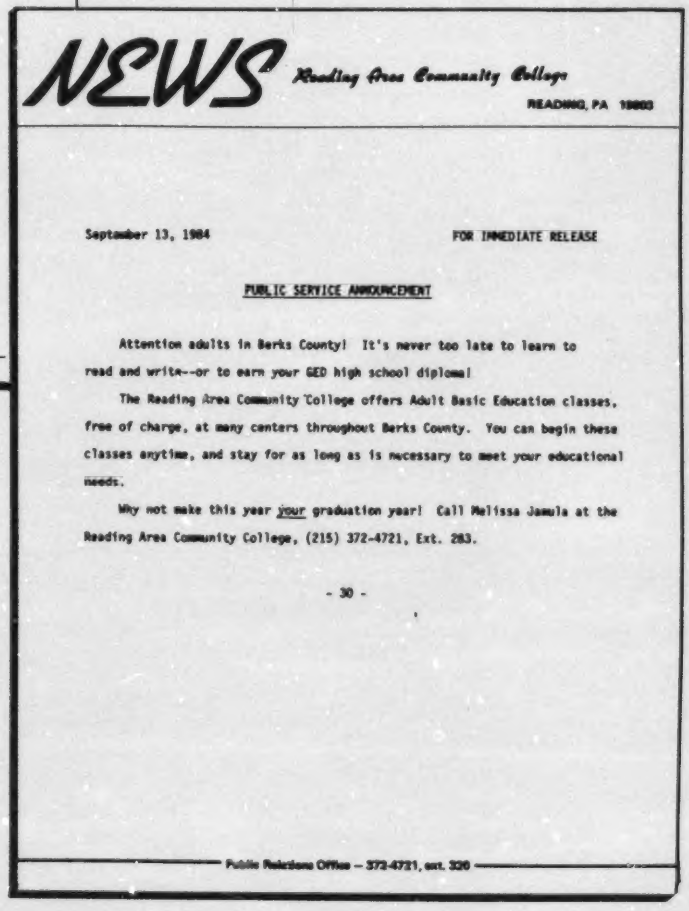
Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula
Coordinator, Adult Basic Education

MJ/nr

an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

. . .and the radio announcement, which was used almost verbatim.



NEWS Reading Area Community College

READING, PA 19603

September 13, 1984 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Attention adults in Berks County! It's never too late to learn to read and write--or to earn your GED high school diploma!

The Reading Area Community College offers Adult Basic Education classes, free of charge, at many centers throughout Berks County. You can begin these classes anytime, and stay for as long as is necessary to meet your educational needs.

Why not make this year your graduation year! Call Melissa Jamula at the Reading Area Community College, (215) 372-4721, Ext. 283.

- 30 -

Public Relations Office -- 372-4721, ext. 320

Grassroots Publicity

#7 • LETTER WRITING

GOAL

To recruit adult students by (1) creating an awareness of program offerings on the part of local agencies and key community leaders and (2) personally inviting former students who did not complete the program to return to class.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Several weeks before classes begin

Planning Time: This is a time-consuming activity because of the extensive mailing list. To save staff time, former students or members of an Alumni Association might be available to help with the mailing.

Duration: Several weeks

COST

Printing: approximately $6 per 100 copies of each standard letter. To use bulk rate mailing, a permit costs a $50 one-time fee plus $50 per year. To keep an account active, you must mail in bulk at least once a year. A bulk mailing must consist of at least 200 identical pieces. Current base rate is 6¢ per piece, each weighing 2.6029 ounces or less. For a mailing within one city's zip codes, or for at least 50 pieces to each zip code, you may qualify for the "five-digit rate" of 4.9¢ per piece.

PROCEDURE

1. We compiled a mailing list of last year's students, the principals of every high school in our target area, presidents of school parent organizations, state legislators, U.S. Senators and Representatives, churches, and human service agencies.
2. We wrote a letter to each of these groups, explaining programs and benefits for each group's clients. To cut down preparation time, these letters were quite similar.
3. Before stuffing and sealing, we double-checked bulk-mailing procedures with the Post Office.
4. Volunteers from last year's classes helped prepare the mailing.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Very good

Primary Strengths: Any reminder to the community about the program is nothing but beneficial. Former students truly appreciate a personal invitation.

Primary Weakness: More time-consuming and expensive than many other PR activities.

RECOMMENDATION

In compiling a mailing list, don't "reinvent the wheel." Perhaps someone in your organization already has the lists you need. Or, call your Intermediate Unit for the principals' list. Ask your school district for the elementary schools; letters to each school can be addressed "Attn: Parent Organization President." Call your county courthouse for legislators' addresses. Your Chamber of Commerce, United Way, or human-services clearinghouse can furnish agency addresses. Churches are listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory.

See a reduction of our six letters on page 15.

#7 LETTER WRITING

Six letters covered six key groups.

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Box 1706 reading, pennsylvania 19603 (215) 372-4721

September 5, 1984

Good Morning :

The Adult Education Department of the Reading Area Community College is pleased to offer a service that we hope may be of value to your parishioners.

Beginning September 24, classes will be offered in Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). In these classes, students can learn basic reading and math skills, work toward earning their high school equivalency diploma,or learn to speak, read, and write English. The curriculum is specifically designed for adults, and much of it is consumer-oriented. Classes are offered both days and evenings at various locations throughout the county. These ABE,GED, and ESL classes are completely free of charge !

If anyone in your congregation can benefit from our classes, we'd be pleased to have them be a part of our program. They can obtain more detailed information by contacting the Adult Education Department of Reading Area Community College at 372-4721, extension 280.

We would appreciate if you would make this information available to your parishioners by publishing it in your weekly bulletin or by posting it in an appropriate space.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Box 1706 reading, pennsylvania 19603 (215) 372-4721

September , 1984

Good Morning :

The Adult Education Department of the Reading Area Community College is pleased to offer a service that we hope may be of value to some members of your organization.

Beginning September 24, classes will be offered in Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). In these classes, students can learn basic reading and math skills, work toward earning their high school equivalency diploma, or learn to speak, read, and write English. The curriculum is specifically designed for adults, and much of it is consumer-oriented. Classes are offered both days and evenings at various locations throughout the city. (Chances are that there's a class for you just a few blocks from home!) All of these ABE,GED,and ESL classes are completely free of charge!

If anyone in your organization can benefit from our classes, we'd be pleased to have them be a part of our program. For more information, please contact the Adult Education Department of Reading Area Community College at 372-4721, extension 280.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula

Melissa Jamula
Coordinator, Adult Basic Education

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Box 1706 reading, pennsylvania 19603 (215) 372-4721

September 5, 1984

Good Morning :

The Adult Education Department of Reading Area Community College is pleased to offer a service that we hope may be of value to your clients or their families.

Beginning September 24, classes will be offered in Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). In these classes, students can learn basic reading and math skills, work toward earning their high school equivalency diploma, or learn to speak, read, and write English. The curriculum is specifically designed for adults, and much of it is individualized. Classes are offered both days and evenings at various locations throughout the county and are free of charge!

If you feel that any of your clients could benefit by our classes, we'd be pleased to have them be a part of our program. Please inquire about specific class information by contacting the Adult Education Department of Reading Area Community College at (215) 372-4721, extension 280.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Box 1706 reading, pennsylvania 19603 (215) 372-4721

September 5, 1984

Dear

The Adult Education Department of Reading Area Community College is very pleased to, again during the 1984-85 academic year, offer a program that may be of value to your students.

Our G.E.D. (General Educational Development) program offers students the alternative of earning their high school equivalency diploma. This diploma, issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, is recognized by colleges, industry and most branches of the armed services as a legitimate high school diploma. To obtain this diploma, a student must pass a six-hour examination in five academic areas. The fee for the G.E.D. exam is $15.00. Although one may take the examination without formal preparation, the Reading Area Community College offers classes, free of charge, to prepare for the test. Classes are located at various sites throughout the county and run from September through May, with an open entry policy in effect. (Please note: the state requires a student to be 17 years of age or, under special circumstances, 17 years of age, and formally withdrawn from day school, in order to take the G.E.D. exam.)

Please understand that we are in no way encouraging students to drop out of high school. However, once that decision is made, we would like students to be aware of alternative education available to them.

We would be very happy to discuss our program in more detail with you. Please

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Box 1706 reading, pennsylvania 19603 (215) 372-4721

September 5, 1984

Dear

The Adult Education Department of Reading Area Community College is pleased to inform you that, once again, for the 1984-85 academic year, we are able to offer a service that, we feel, will be of value to many of your constituents.

Through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, we are able to offer Adult Basic Education classes, free of charge, to all adults in Berks and Schuylkill counties. In these classes, students can learn basic reading and math skills, learn to speak, read and write English, or study toward earning their G.E.D. high school equivalency diploma. The curriculum in all of these classes is designed specifically for adults, and much of it is consumer-oriented.

I'm sure you are aware of the latest statistics indicating that 50% of the adults in Pennsylvania do not have their high school diplomas. In today's economy, adults seeking employment are finding it increasingly important to hold a diploma, or, at least, have adequate reading and math skills. Our program can provide them with these skills.

I hope that, being aware of our Adult Basic Education classes, you will be able to pass this information on to those people in your constituency who you feel could benefit from our program. For more information, please call 372-4721, extension 280.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula
Melissa Jamula
Coordinator, Adult Basic Education

MJ:rjs

an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

Adult Education

Reading Area Community College P.O. Box 1706 Reading, PA 19603 Telephone: (215) 373-4721

Dear Student:

The Adult Education Department of the Reading Area Community College is pleased to be able to offer Adult Basic Education, G.E.D., and English as a Second Language classes for the 1984-85 school year.

We're happy you were part of our program last year. We hope you had a very enjoyable summer and that now you're ready to COME BACK TO CLASS!!!

Our program will begin the week of September 25th. Please call us for specific center information. Call 373-4721, ext. 280.

Sincerely,

Melissa Jamula
Melissa Jamula
Coordinator, Adult Basic Education

P.S. When you come to class, why not bring a friend!!

Grassroots Publicity

#8 • E.S.L. HELP GROUP

GOALS

To form a group of ESL students to help ease the transition of recent immigrants to their new country. In so doing, to function as a support group for each other and as a recruitment tool for our ESL program.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Anytime; preferably soon after the program year begins

Planning time: Several hours, on several occasions. To be effective, organizing such a group is rather time consuming.

Duration: Ongoing

PROCEDURES

1. Our staff formulated the idea of a Help Group, surveyed ESL students, discovered great interest, and proceeded with plans.
2. We established the purposes of the Help Group: (1) to fulfill the need for a community network to help immigrants, informing them in their native languages of services, including English classes, and (2) to serve as an in-house support vehicle for current students.
3. At the first meeting we explained the group's purposes. Students filled out a form providing name, address, and phone number, native country, and language spoken. We then compiled a comprehensive list. (Members represent over 20 countries.)
4. We created and distributed to group members a list of pertinent service agencies as well as phone numbers of those staff members who are native to the area and could serve as resource people.
5. We identified several people in the group to maintain a comprehensive list of members. When a referral calls, these people put them in touch with a group member who speaks the langauge.
6. We sent a letter about the group to all social service agencies and churches in the area. (We also sent our multi-lanague flyer.)
7. We had the newspaper do a feature article about the group.

EVALUATION

General Impact: As of this writing, the Group is in its early stages, but, so far, the impact is overwhelming! More than 60 attended the last meeting.

Major Weaknesses: This is a very time-consuming activity. Whoever is in charge must be truly committed to the Help Group. The activity involves clerical work, meetings, mailings, and ongoing student contact. Nevertheless, in our estimation the effort has been very worthwhile and gratifying.

Unexpected Occurrences: The group has chosen to be much more active than we had expected. We assumed that the Group would meet only once or twice a year, remaining mostly a telephone network. However, the group has shown a need for self-support. ESL students who have no social life outside of class find the Help Group a valued event. The group has been meeting once every two months and are already planning activities.

RECOMMENDATION Utilize your ESL students as much as possible in the organization and functioning of a Help Group. They will probably be eager to become involved and will develop a sense of ownership toward the group.

See news article and photos of the ESL Help Group on the facing page. 17

#8 E.S.L. HELP GROUP

Staff photo by J. Charles Gardner

Members of a newly formed help group plan goals and activities for assisting people who move to Berks County from foreign countries. From left are Grace Reyes, from Guatemala; Tomaso Spadafora, from Italy; and Ravinder Kaur, from India.

Today's settlers

Group helps newcomers to Berks

By Susan Shelly
Staff Writer

Natives of a variety of foreign nations who have moved to Berks County in hopes of finding better jobs and better lives, know first-hand the problems of getting acclimated.

Locating a place to live, looking for a job, and trying to enroll children in schools is difficult in a new country, and for immigrants who do not speak English, the problems are intensified.

To make it a little easier for newcomers to Berks County, some of the students in the English as a Second Language classes offered by the Reading Area Community College have formed a help group.

With about 75 members representing 25 countries, and speaking a number of languages, the group will serve as a support group to new immigrants, pointing them to area grocery stores, hospitals, and schools.

Group members also will be able to comfort immigrants homesick for their countries and families, and refer them to legal aid if necessary.

AREA SOCIAL agencies and churches, who often deal with new immigrants, will be asked to direct them toward the help group.

"This is just an effort to give a little extra help and ease some frustrations," said Melissa Jamula, coordinator of the adult basic education program at RACC. "We hope this will help."

Although some groups, such as the Hispanic and Polish communities, already have informal networking systems which point newcomers toward the proper channels, many immigrants have no one on whom to depend.

"We know this can be a very lonely time," Jamula said. "Those people move here with no friends and nowhere to go, and it's very difficult."

Grace Reyes, who moved to Reading several years ago from Guatemala, remembers just how difficult it was.

"I did have many problems," Reyes said. "I could not talk with anyone. Most of the time I used my dictionary and my sign language."

Language is the major problem for people moving in from foreign countries, and the barrier is reflected in many aspects of their lives.

"I STAYED in the house all the time when I first moved here," said Ravinder Kaur, a native of India. "I didn't do anything, because I was afraid if I would go out and lose my way, I could not get back. I could not ask for directions."

Her fear and embarrassment of not being able to speak English even prevented Kaur from meeting her neighbors.

"I was scared to talk to my neighbors," she said, "because if I talked wrong I was afraid they would laugh at me, or would not want to answer me."

The women agreed that learning to speak English has made their lives much easier and more pleasant.

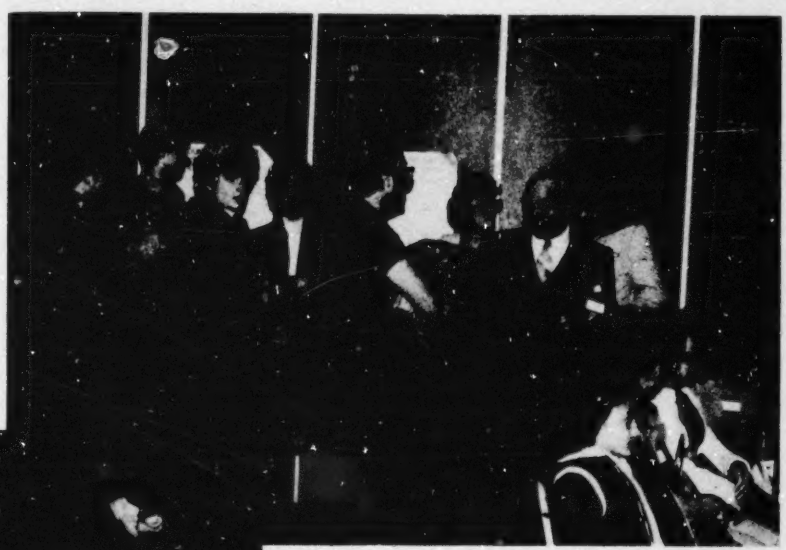
Meeting people in their language classes with whom they shared the same problems also helped them get over the loneliness and frustration of being strangers in a new country.

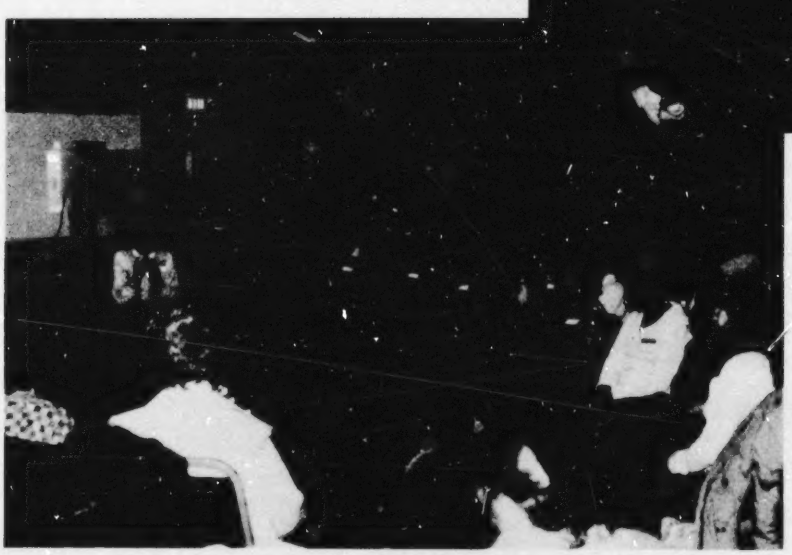
"English class, for many of these people, is the only social activity they have," Jamula said. "They're not comfortable going anywhere else because of the language problem, but in class they feel very much at home."

Hopefully, said Jamula, the help group will be able to hasten the time when newcomers feel at home, and make the first few weeks in Berks County a better time for immigrants.

A phone call to the newspaper resulted in a feature story.

Group members mingle before the meeting.





Melissa Jamula speaks to the group.

Grassroots Publicity

#9 • MULTI-LINGUAL FLYER

GOAL

To recruit students for English as a Second Language classes by reaching them in their native languages.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: In an open-enrollment program, anytime. In a program with set enrollment periods, 1-2 weeks before classes begin.

Planning Time: Less than 2 hours, depending on available pool of ESL students to translate message

Duration Ongoing

COST

About $6.00 for the first 100 copies

PROCEDURE

1. We chose a simple message: "Come to class. Learn to speak English!" Students representing 15 different languages provided translations. The only other information on the flyer were two class locations, along with days and times, set off in blocks at the bottom of the flyer and written in English. By putting the days and times in English, the flyer looked less cluttered, and students agreed that potential students, having noticed their native language on the top portion, would be able to understand the days and times at the bottom.
2. Rather than typeset, we simply wrote the multi-language message freehand in felt-tip pen.
3. We had the flyers printed in orange ink on tan, 8½" by 14½"paper.
4. We distributed the flyer to human-service agencies and churches. The most obvious contacts would include the state Bureau of Employment Security, the Department of Public Welfare, the Hispanic Center, a Vietnamese church, and perhaps the Immigration and Naturalization Service (or a local agency that deals with immigrant concerns). These agencies made the flyers available to persons using their services. The flyers also alerted staff members to the availability of adult-education programs.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Several new students showed up with the flyers in hand, but by press time it was too early to report definitive impact.

Major Strength: Very low cost, yet a very eye-catching publicity vehicle

Major Weakness: To be effective, flyers must reach a specific target audience — speakers of other languages — not the general public. This requires extra attention to placing the flyers in exactly the right distribution outlets.

RECOMMENDATION Print enough flyers to send some along with current ESL students. They, better than anyone, know where to reach potential students.

See a reduction of our multi-language flyer on page 19.

Come to class.

Learn to speak English!

VEN A CLASE Y APRENDE COMO HABLAR EN INGLÉS

CHODŹIE DO SZKOŁY. UCZCIE SIĘ MÓWIĆ PO ANGIELSKU

Приходите в КЛАСС. Учитесь говорить по-АНГЛИЙСКИ.

Đến lớp học. để học nói Anh Văn

VINO LA SCOALĂ. ÎNVAȚĂ SĂ VORBEȘTI ENGLEZA.

TUAJ RAU TSEY KAWM NTAWV. SIB CHOG KAWM LUS AS KIV

Venez à la classe; apprenez l'anglais!

Kommen Sie in die Schule, um englisch zu lernen!

Vengano alla classe per imparare l'inglese!

Dođi u razred! Učiti engleski jezik.

Kom til klassen. Lær å snakke engelsk.

Venha para Escola. Aprenda a falar Inglês.

來上學

學說英語

कम उ कलास

लरन उ स्पीक इंग्लिश

تعالوا الى الصف و تعلموا اللغة

الانجليزية

Reading Area Community College
(2nd and Penn Sts.)
Tuesday, Thursday
9 A.M. - 12 noon

Tenth and Green Elementary School
(10th and Green Sts., Reading)
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
6:30 - 9:00 P.M.

READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE 372-4721, ext. 280

#9 MULTI-LINGUAL FLYER

A simple flyer advertised ESL classes in 15 languages. Actual size: 8½" by 14".

Grassroots Publicity

#10 • STUDENT OF THE YEAR

GOAL

To nominate a student for the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Outstanding Adult Student of the Year award. In so doing, to (1) recognize a student who exemplifies program goals and (2) through publicizing the nominee's achievements, reach potential adult students and the general public with news of our program's value.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Be on the lookout year-round for outstanding students. PDE's nomination deadline is usually around the end of November.

Planning Time: Approximately 6 hours, which includes an in-depth interview with the nominee and the time required to write the person's story.

Duration: Primarily from November nominations to February award presentation.

COST

None. If a nominee is chosen as a finalist, PDE pays for transportation to the state adult education conference in Hershey.

PROCEDURE

1. Administration and teachers identified students who best exemplified the benefits of our program. (The student does not have to be a future Ph.D. candidate!)
2. We narrowed down our candidates to one, using PDE's nominating procedures defined in a notification distributed in October. We interviewed the nominee and submitted her story to PDE.
3. We sent the nominee a congratulatory letter and a copy of the story sent to PDE.
4. Two choices: we could either wait to see if the nominee would be chosen as one of ten finalists or publicize the story right away as a local achievement. Because a finalist tends to draw more publicity, we waited. Our nominee was chosen as a finalist, so we contacted a local newspaper to ask if a reporter would interview the student. Meantime, we sent the reporter the student's story.
5. Our nominee attended the award presentation in Hershey, but did not win. Nevertheless, her story appeared in the paper a few days later, along with a huge photograph.
6. We notified our college president, county commissioners, state senator, and Congressman. Most sent the student congratulations.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Tremendous

Major Strength: A high-mileage activity; no more positive way to publicize a program

Unexpected Occurrences: As a result of the publicity we received, we had a large number of calls from potential students. We also received several calls from elected officials who commented favorably on our program in general.

RECOMMENDATION Even if the nominee is not named a state finalist, don't minimize the accomplishment! Approach newspapers from the angle of "our program's nominee for Pennsylvania's Adult Student of the Year."

See a reduction of the newspaper article about our nominee on page 21.

#10 STUDENT OF THE YEAR

A high-mileage activity: This feature article was over twice this size as run in the local newspaper.

Tempo *of the* Times / *education*

Staff photo by J. Sheridan Evans

Marisol Rivera, a Reading Area Community College student who recently was named one of the 10 most outstanding adult basic education students in Pennsylvania, hopes to use her education to help members of the local Hispanic community.

Quick learner

Hispanic leaps over language barrier

By Susan Shelly
Staff Writer

Life for Marisol Rivera has gotten much easier since June 1983.

That is when she arrived in Reading from Cantano, Puerto Rico, knowing few people and very little English.

"When I first came here, I knew nothing," Rivera said. "I could hardly speak to anyone. I was with my mother all the time, and she tried to help me."

WITH HER MOTHER'S encouragement, and her own great initiative and determination, Rivera not only learned to speak English, but recently was named by the state Department of Education as one of the 10 most outstanding adult basic education students in Pennsylvania.

Rivera, of 849 Greenwich St., moved to Reading to be with her mother, who had arrived earlier in hopes of finding better medical care than was available in Puerto Rico.

Then only 18 years old, she missed her friends in Catano, and was severely hampered by her inability to speak English. The only thing she really knew, was that she needed to learn the language.

"My mother told me all the time that if I wanted to learn, I would learn," Rivera said. "But, still, I was very afraid."

Forcing herself to put those fears aside, Rivera followed her mother's advice and enrolled in adult education and English as a Second Language classes at Reading Community College.

She remembers it as one of the most significant days in her life.

Rivera learned quickly, and made many friends in her classes.

"MARISOL LIT UP the room," said Sandy McCormick, her teacher in the English As a Second Language class. "She was friendly and funny, and encouraged the others to work hard too. She wasn't afraid to make mistakes."

Now enrolled in an associate degree program at RAAC, she is employed part-time by the college's continuing education department, working as a clerk in Reading High School.

She is happy, and very proud of what she has accomplished. What she most wants to do, is to hold up those accomplishments to the rest

(Turn to Page 11, Col. 1)

Hispanic leaps language barrier

(Continued from Page 8)

of the Hispanic community as an example of the results of hard work.

Rivera, who was the 1984 Miss Hispanic Council, said she wants her accomplishments to be an example to her fellow Hispanics in Berks. "If you want something, and you try very hard, you can get it," said Rivera. "It is very important to me that other people know that.

"They do not know how easy it will be for them if they learn," Rivera said. "When I first came here, I knew nothing. I could hardly speak to anyone."

RIVERA ENCOUNTERS many non-English speaking people in her job, and uses every opportunity to steer them toward RAAC.

"It is very important that they learn to speak English if they want to improve," Rivera said.

She has great faith in her Hispanic neighbors, and believes they will help themselves by working together.

"The Hispanic community is improving every day," Rivera said. "They want to prove themselves and get better, but they need help. We need leaders in Reading."

Rivera, who is now 21, is striving to be one of those leaders. She wants to teach others to speak English, hoping to make their lives easier, as her has become.

"I can help people," Rivera said. "And then they can help others."

Grassroots Publicity

#11 • FAST-FOOD PLACEMAT

GOAL

To advertise the GED program on a McDonald's paper placemat.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: About 3 months before the placemat will appear
Planning Time: 2-4 hours
Duration: 3 months for Community Calendar; 1 week for exclusive ad

COST

Free for Community Calendar; approx. $12 for 3,000 mats (we had 15,000 printed); cost of type and layout (approx. $25-40)

PROCEDURE

1. We phoned the manager of a McDonald's fast-food restaurant. As is common, this manager was in charge of several McDonald's locations in the area. We explained our program, stressing the fact that it is offered free of charge to adults in this county. Having noticed other nonprofit organizations' ads on McDonald's placemats, we asked if our program could be advertised on a placemat for a specified amount of time. He said yes.
2. We wrote simple copy for the placemat and had it typeset and laid out.
3. We submitted a camera-ready mechanical to the manager. He had the placemats printed at his discounted cost. We reimbursed him for the printing.
4. As a bonus, the McDonald's restaurants in our area publicized our program on their "Community Calendar" placemat, free of charge, for three months.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Excellent

Major Strength: For as little as $50 we reached at least 15,000 people.

Unexpected Occurrence: Having the Community Calendar for three months at no charge

RECOMMENDATION

Allow plenty of time to make your contacts. Busy stores have many obligations and might not be able to honor a last-minute request.

See a reduction of our McDonald's placemat on page 23.

#11 FAST-FOOD PLACEMAT

. . .for those interested in stuffing more than a Big Mac into their heads.
Actual size: 10" by 14".

IT'S A GOOD TIME FOR THE GREAT TASTE™

McDonald's

Adults...

You can earn your

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA!

- Friendly classes
- Learn at your own rate
- Free of charge!

Call Reading Area Community College

372-4721, ext. 280

Grassroots Publicity

#12 • ADULT EDUCATION WEEK

GOAL

To procure a Mayor's proclamation of Adult Education Week to generate community awareness of the need for and value of ABE.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: At least two months before Adult Education Week (usually February)
Planning Time: Varies, depending on whether you plan celebration activities
Duration: One week

COST

None

PROCEDURES

1. We decided to ask our City Council to declare an Adult Education Week. We chose a week during February because this is traditionally Adult Education Month in Pennsylvania.
2. We called the Mayor's office and spoke with her administrative assistant. We explained our program and made our request. The Mayor's office was happy to comply.
3. The administrative assistant asked us to write the proclamation, to be sure the correct points were included. We received a form containing five "Whereas" and one "Therefore" statements, and we filled in the blanks. We used only the most important and attention-getting facts about ABE, both locally and statewide.
4. We sent the form to the Mayor. She signed and sealed it, and in a few weeks the City Council read the Proclamation at its regular session. The Mayor made very complimentary remarks about our program. The proclamation, bound in a casing bearing the city seal, was presented to us at that meeting.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Good

Major strength: A favorable image of ABE to elected officials

Major weakness: We did not gain all the publicity we would have liked because the newspaper did not pick up this story, except as part of the City Council meeting report. This was probably because we had had a large news feature in the newspaper less than a week before.

RECOMMENDATION Plan several activities during this week — perhaps "Bring a Friend to Class" or an open house. If your program is part of a larger institution, speak to other departments about a joint effort. Then call your favorite newspaper reporter to encourage a feature on the week's events. Be prepared with some research on ABE facts and figures. The truth is staggering and tends to arouse great interest.

See the Mayor's Proclamation on page 25.

#12 ADULT EDUCATION WEEK

The Mayor's Proclamation touched on several of adult education's strong points.

KAREN A. MILLER
Mayor

THE CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA

8th & WASHINGTON STS. READING, PA 19601 (215) 320-6234

Dept. of Public Affairs

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, according to the 1980 census, over 40% of the adults in Berks County do not have a high school diploma; and

WHEREAS, in Pennsylvania, 30% of the adult population is functionally illiterate; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the great need for adult education, more than 300 Adult Basic Education programs throughout Pennsylvania, such as those offered through the Reading Area Community College, are providing instruction, free of charge, to teach adults beginning reading and math skills, English as a Second Language, and GED high school equivalency preparation; and

WHEREAS, as a direct result of these Adult Basic Education classes, in one academic year alone, more than 33,000 adult students in Pennsylvania were reached, resulting in welfare costs being reduced by $1,900,000 and income generated from new employment being $9,828,000; and

WHEREAS, Governor Dick Thornburgh has named February as Adult Education Month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Karen A. Miller, Mayor of the City of Reading, do hereby proclaim the week of February 12-18, 1984 as

ADULT EDUCATION WEEK

in the City of Reading and further urge our adult citizens who are in need of a high school diploma or of learning reading and math skills, to contact the Reading Area Community College.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of the City of Reading, Pennsylvania, this 8th day of February, 1984.

Karen A. Miller

KAREN A. MILLER
MAYOR

Grassroots Publicity

#13 • IN-HOUSE PRESENTATION

GOAL

To acquaint the agency's Board of Directors with the adult education program.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: Anytime

Planning Time: Approximately 3 hours to write and rehearse the presentation

Duration: Presentation should take no longer than 15 minutes, unless using a slide show with a Q and A period. (See Recommendations, below.)

COST

None

PROCEDURE:

1. We determined a need to familiarize our college's trustees with the offerings and workings of our adult-education program. We realized that sometimes the most worthwhile publicity takes place within a program's own organization. Being grant-funded and noncredit, adult-education programs may be in danger of being just plain overlooked — in the shadow of larger, more visible programs conducted under the same general umbrella. We felt it was essential that leaders of our organization recognize the great value of our program, in case they didn't already.
2. We approached the Board about the possibility of appearing on the agenda of a future Board meeting. In our request, we explained that we wished to tell them more about "the very fine program" that their institution is offering as a community service.
3. We prepared a brief and enthusiastic presentation highlighting the benefits of our adult-education program to the community, then opened the floor for questions.
4. Rather than becoming too involved in our presentation, we provided Board members with high-interest handouts to peruse at their leisure.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Excellent

Major Strengths: The presentation was enthusiastically received by RACC's Board of Trustees. Members asked numerous questions and made a number of favorable comments. We felt confident that they grasped our purposes and accepted them as attributes of the college.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Include in your handouts to the Board copies of the publicity (e.g. newspaper articles) your program has had in the past year.
2. An in-house presentation may be enhanced with a slide/sound presentation. One such show was produced by a 1983-84 special project, "Now I Can!" In 10 minutes, the show documents general ABE/GED/ESL programming along with its support needs. A duplicatable handout for the audience is provided on request. Contact AdvancE for loan information.

See our presentation notes on page 27.

Notes
IN-HOUSE PRESENTATION

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to tell you about a program that RACC offers free of charge as a community service. Through a grant from PA Dept. of Education, we are able to offer three general types of classes to adults in Berks County -- ESL, GED, Adult Basic Ed.

These classes are run continually from late September through mid-May. Adults may enter anytime and stay as long as necessary to meet educational needs.

I'd briefly like to tell you about each of these classes so that you might gain a better understanding of what we do within our program.

Our ESL classes teach speaking, reading, and writing skills to non-native Americans -- beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. We have two very distinct complexions -- about half of the class is almost purely Hispanic while the other half represent as many as 20 different countries. Our Hispanic ESL classes are located in the neighborhood schools in Reading and at the Hispanic Center, and our instructors are bilingual.

We do this to try to make coming to class as comfortable as possible for our Hispanic population. Often it is very difficult to "break into" the Hispanic community and to gain their trust, particularly in concentrated living areas such as Oakbrook, so we find that conducting classes in a familiar atmosphere with an instructor who speaks their native language helps to encourage these adults to come to class.

Multi-ethnic classes are concentrated at two centers -- RACC in the daytime and 10th & Green Elementary School in the evening -- delightful! With as many as 20 different countries, the only common bond is English! Students study hard and laugh with each other. Many of these students were truly grateful for the opportunity to come to class. Socialization, culture sharing -- many of these students were professionals in their own country.

Every year when these people come to class we ask them how they found out about our ESL Program. We have determined there is no formal network. In an effort to aid, we have formed an ESL Help Group. (core - purpose - discuss)

In correlation with the ESL Help Group, though not directly associated with our classes, is our Language Bank -- a pool of resource people who are fluent in English and at least one other language. RACC acts as a referral system.

Adult Basic Education
We teach beginning reading and math skills from nonreader to 8th grade level. Materials are adult-oriented -- applicable to daily living skills. Recruiting is one of our most difficult tasks. These students don't or can't read printed ads. Even when aware of the available programs, there is tremendous anxiety in deciding to finally learn to read. One ABE student once told me he thought there was some "terrible secret" to being able to read. How he can.

Notes - Page 2

GED
Classes prepare students to take the exam for the GED high school equivalency diploma issued by the PA Department of Education. Diploma is accepted, by law, as a legitimate high school diploma.

Classes are very individualized -- to accommodate a wide variety of academic abilities. Students usually study grammar, math, and reading skills. It is difficult to generalize on how long one must attend class.

Over the past few years, we've developed a few enrichment classes and activities to further aid GED students.

Discuss - College-bound, Pretesting, Posttest counseling (161 GED graduates are enrolled in RACC = 10% of your credit student body), Job Skills, Graduation

Within our total program, we are currently running 31 classes on a regular basis. In addition to these, we offer a few other "specific classes" (i.e. job skills) for a limited time throughout the year.

We are at 16 different locations throughout the county. We do this to make attending class more convenient for our students.

We also work in cooperation with agencies in the area. In addition to conducting classes at the Hispanic Center, we run a substantial program at Teen Challenge. We work in close cooperation with the Literacy Council and the DPA. We are in continual touch with many other businesses and agencies.

Staffing for our program is entirely part time. I work 24 hours a week. 3 counselors average 4 hours a week. Of 20 instructors, 4 work 23 hours. Many are current or former Reading School District teachers.

This year's budget is slightly over $____ (list total budget and break down into ABE/GED). Unfortunately, this is just not enough. We need more classes and more textbooks!

This is good news and bad news. The bad news is -- not enough money. The good -- we're reaching people; last year we served 1,700 adults. This year, to date, we have registered 800 adults.

While these numbers are encouraging, statistics indicate there are THOUSANDS MORE PEOPLE WE NEED TO REACH! Biggest obstacle each year is spreading the word that we do exist. Budget is almost entirely for salaries and texts. We rely on low-cost grassroots publicity efforts. Last year the local newspaper was very kind to us in coverage of "special interest stories." Included in your folder are a few of the articles that were written about our program last year.

Thank you for the opportunity. . .Delighted to be associated with the program. . . Questions?

#13 IN-HOUSE PRESENTATION

Melissa's notes to herself covered all the points she wanted to make to the Board.

Grassroots Publicity

#14 • BRING A FRIEND TO CLASS

GOAL

To utilize our most valuable resource — our students — to recruit new students.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: 2-3 weeks before target Bring-a-Friend-to-Class days
Planning Time: About 2 hours
Duration: Variable

COST

Minimal: duplication of flyer

PROCEDURES

1. The entire staff agreed that asking our students to help "spread the word" about adult education was a good idea.
2. Most classes were held Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday, so we established one Wednesday and one Thursday as Bring-a-Friend-to-Class days.
3. We duplicated a very informal flyer to distribute to all attending students. It simply asked for their help in publicizing classes and announced when and where to bring a friend to class.
4. We met with teachers for a "pep talk" on the fact that this activity could succeed only if they showed enthusiasm for it. As an incentive, we asked teachers to announce that the class bringing the most friends would be treated to coffee and donuts. (Please note: You may not do this with grant money; you would have to use your organization's petty cash or take donations!)
5. Teachers distributed the flyers to students.
6. On Bring-a-Friend days, a counselor or supervisor visited each class to count and welcome visitors and possibly register them for the program if they desired.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Not good. In the entire program, there were only 15 visitors.

Major Strength: We still believe this could be a viable way to recruit students. We'll have to experiment again, perhaps using a different plan.

Major Weaknesses: Because our classes are held at a number of different locations, perhaps the enthusiasm for this activity was not as great as it might have been in one learning center. Also, we felt as though our teachers did not display the enthusiasm we had hoped for.

RECOMMENDATION Do as much preliminary work as possible to generate enthusiasm.

Grassroots Publicity

#15 • GRADUATION

GOALS

To honor students for their educational accomplishments, to foster community relations, and to gain publicity through a formal GED graduation ceremony.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin: As early in the year as possible to allow ample time to place orders, make reservations, procure a speaker, etc.

Planning time: Lots. . .but it's worth the effort and can be cut substantially with clerical help and a few volunteers (such as past graduates or an organized alumni association).

COST

Varies, depending on whether or not the room must be rented and/or speaker must be paid. (We charge $6 to each graduate attending. This greatly offsets the costs.) Diploma covers cost $4.50 apiece. We also make a contribution to the school music department for the work of the orchestra and choir. An optional expense (which we do not do) is to rent caps and gowns. This is difficult because many students don't know if they are attending graduation until the last minute.

PROCEDURE

THE PRELIMINARIES

1. In September, we established a graduation date for the following June. We also selected and reserved an appropriate location, the high school auditorium. (An all-purpose room, church hall, or banquet facility are also fine, though they may involve a rental fee.) We also reserved the high school cafeteria for a reception following the ceremony.
2. We maintain a partnership with the Reading Standard Evening High School, which graduates about 40 students each year, bringing the total number of adult graduates attending graduation to about 150. Thanks to the Evening High School's closer linkage with the Reading School District, we were able to procure (far in advance) the high school orchestra and choir to perform at our event.
3. We invited a minister to give the opening invocation and closing benediction. (We ask ministers of different faiths each year.)
4. In October, we booked our graduation speaker. (We suggest the high school principal, college president, school district superintendent, an official from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, or an elected official.)
5. In January, we ordered diploma covers from Josten's.
6. In April, we ordered program covers. (These could also be original designs, inexpensively printed.) We printed the programs in mid-May, then inserted a list of graduates at the last minute.

(Beginning here, we are reporting on general procedures rather than actual occurrences, due to project schedule.)

THE INVITATIONS

7. We invite all students who have passed the GED test between June of the previous year and May of the current year. Our clerical help types labels after each month's test results come in, to avoid compiling a huge mailing list at the end.
8. In early April, we s[illegible]d a letter inviting these students to attend

more

graduation. We tell them it is a lovely, formal ceremony, when and where it will be held, and that they are welcome to bring friends and family. We explain the need for the $6 fee, that they will receive a diploma cover at no charge, and that their friends and family may attend the reception as well as the ceremony. At the bottom of the letter is a form to return, including their name, address, and phone number. People taking the test in April and May are told of graduation at the test site.

9. We send a follow-up letter to those responding to the first letter. This letter tells them where and when to report (an hour ahead of time, to go over the ceremony), what to wear (simply, "appropriate clothing"), and to encourage them to bring friends and family.
10. We prepare certificates of achievement to be put into the diploma covers after the ceremony. We prepare 2½" by 3" cards with each graduate's name on them.

THE EVENT

11. We assemble graduates away from the ceremony area. We give each a program and go over it with them, explaining how to file in and out, when to stand, etc. We give out name cards. We also show how to fit the state GED diploma into the diploma covers.
11. When students file onto the stage, they receive empty diploma covers in which to insert their state GED diplomas later.
12. During the ceremony, volunteers lay out our local certificates of achievement in alphabetical order in the reception room. Other volunteers prepare coffee, punch, and cookies, pouring many cups in advance to be ready for the rush of people after the ceremony.

EVALUATION

General Impact: Tremendous! This is a warm way to end the year with a bang.

Major Strength: Having a graduation ceremony fulfills a dream for many adult students.

Major Weaknesses: The activity requires a great time commitment. Also, it might be necessary to eliminate the extra "trimmings" if there is no organization behind the program to cover some of the expenses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Plan early. Keep a check list of every aspect of the planning to make sure you don't miss anything.
2. Call the newspaper and/or TV station(s) to cover the graduation. Entice them with a few personal stories of successful students because the media often prefer focusing on individuals.
3. Invite your agency's board of directors, top leaders, community officials, or anyone you would like to have. Some public names enjoy being seen at such functions.
4. Some programs serve either a catered or covered-dish dinner to everyone in attendance. This can raise the ticket price significantly, but many programs have done it successfully for years.

#16 • MARKETING CLASS

Sometimes even your best ideas seem stale after you've used them year after year. For some fresh ideas, go to the nearest college and explain your program to a professor who teaches marketing or advertising. Perhaps a student in need of a field project, or the class as a whole, could develop some new publicity schemes for your ABE program. Be prepared with a fact sheet on your program, and stress the fact that publicity ideas must cost little or nothing.

#17 • CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Everyone likes to identify with a well-known person. Ask local celebrities to endorse your program in public service announcements in the local media or donated billboard space. If you're lucky, you can find an elected official or well-known personality who also happens to be a GED graduate. Sports figures are a particularly good choice, but whomever you find, make sure the person has high "face recognition." In some cases, you may have to work through an agent or guild.

#18 • ONGOING CONTACTS

Once you've created a good linkage, don't lose it through lack of communication. Maintain a list of key names, along with their addresses and phone numbers, and drop them a note or give them a call every now and then. If you have a newsletter, be sure to put your key contacts on the mailing list, even if the newsletter deals primarily with program happenings.

Kim Edwards, GED Coordinator for the California State Department of Education, suggests meeting with "at least the community affairs director, but preferably the station manager, of local TV and radio stations. Beg them for just five minutes. Go in with a super sales pitch — use lots of charts and graphs — about how GED (or whatever you are pushing) is a community concern and directly or indirectly affects almost all their viewers. . .Tell them you'd like them to keep you in mind for their long-range planning. Go in with a few suggestions — public service announcements, guest spots during the noon news, appearances on ethnic programs, notices on community calendar." Then send your contacts ongoing information. Every time they do something for you, send a thank-you.

#19 • OPEN HOUSE

If you're feeling very energetic, plan an open house, either at your program's site or at a hotel (which has donated its facilities in return for press credit, suggests Nina Cox, a California marketing consultant). Invite every big name you want to impress, plus, of course, a reporter and camera from a TV station. If you can twist some arms, get a local band or DJ to donate the entertainment. Plant ABE information all over the place. Publicize the event with a radio PSA and inexpensive invitations (at least to the VIPs). Have your students, staff, or alumni association supply refreshments (though a hotel may limit you to only what comes out of their kitchen). Have a raffle drawing (check local laws on this) or game show. Above all else, use this as a time to mingle — and to make a big splash!

#20 • PACKAGED P.R.

No one should have to reinvent the wheel, so learn what publicity has already been done. AdvancE at the Pennsylvania Department of Education in Harrisburg will loan publicity materials that have been produced as special projects (like Grassroots Publicity) in Pennsylvania. Just call 1-800-992-2283, toll-free, of course. You can borrow a slide/tape show or use camera-ready newspaper ads from "Now I Can!", a 1983-84 special project produced by Tana Reiff. Take a look at a public relations packet developed by the Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Council for adults at the 0-4 level. See the newsletter of The Center for Literacy in Philadelphia. If you could use some bumper stickers or posters for recruiting rural adults, ask about the project by David Fluke from near Troy. If you need to recruit volunteers, perhaps you could use a slide-tape series and brochure developed by Eagleville Hospital. Every year, more of these projects are added to the AdvancE collection, and they're there for you to use.

#21 • OTHER IDEAS

Thanks to Kim Edwards, Learning Resources Network in Manhattan, Kansas, and others for these suggestions:

Write an article about your program for a regional magazine or newspaper. Study the publication to get a feel for its style and readership. Learn submission requirements before you write. You may be required to write a query, or proposal first.

Be a public speaker. Carry your message to civic or religious groups. This is a direct method of recruiting volunteer tutors.

Try to secure free ad space. Contact the advertising departments of local and regional magazines to learn requirements for display advertising. Prepare a camera-ready ad and send it to the publisher of each magazine with a letter explaining that your program is a community service and asking if they would be willing to donate space, just in case they have any extra room.

Meet with local and statewide businesses about sponsoring advertisements on grocery bags and milk cartons. Some programs we know of have talked utility companies into enclosing flyers in their bills.

Have former students telemarket your program, as was done at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Best time to call is during the early evening hours. Prepare callers with complete registration information and encourage them to share their own success stories.

Hire an answering service to conduct 24-hour registration during your peak enrollment periods. The Denver Free University did it for less than a dollar per new student.

If your program charges any sort of fee, offer a money-back guarantee as the Toronto Skills Exchange did. The fee would be refundable if the student discontinues classes for any reason.

Get your grassroots publicity going and watch your program start growing!